

the
defenestrator

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The defenestrator is Philly's sporadic newspaper for resistance, creative revolution and action. To defenestrate Power means total refusal of its tools and tentacles. Like the Hussites who had their oppressors thrown down from the Prague castle into the angry mob below, the defenestrator wrestles power and privilege from its highest and most protected strongholds and casts the beast out of the window and down into the angry hands of the people.

Prison Staff! Caution ! Protected Private Property

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the defenestrator

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front cover:

Clown sees Bike Cops and Storm Troopers Looking for a fight. Where else but at the Mummies parade?

photo: Beth Pulse

Industrial Tranformation District: Gentrification by Any Means Necessary

“You’ve got to say it out loud to hear how crazy it is,” spoke Al Alston, of the African American Bussiness and Residents Association (AABRA). He was referring to a new bill, introduced by Councilman Derrell Clarke, that would establish a new zoning designation called, “Industrial Transformation District” (ITD). According to a handout distributed at an AABRA community meeting on Thursday, January 25, 2007 at the Songhai Cultural Center, the language of the bill “is so vague that any district with two continuous acres of vacant land- ANYWHERE in the city- can qualify. This legislation would effectively eliminate a community’s right to contest unwanted real estate developments.”

Currently when a zoning change or building project is proposed, the community in that district must be informed of a mandatory public hearing before the city council, where people can voice their concerns. If the ITD bill passes, however, the community will have no say in the process. The decisions are made by the planning commission, which is not required to have public hearings and the zoning board cannot reverse planning commission decisions on the ITD’s.

To top of the corruption sundae, a little cherry of a clause allows developers to change their initial plans submitted without any approval. As Alston puts it: “ Developers create the new rules and then get break the rules. Meanwhile, we have no say in any of it.”

Westrum, a ruthless, large developer has Brewerytown in its hungry gaze, where it seeks to build overpriced houses with no room for the struggling community who already live there. If the ITD bills pass, Westrum wins. You might remember Westrum as the developer that pulled homeless people out of a shelter with promises of free food and put them before the city council claiming that they were community members who supported Westrum's project.

Charges Against Anti-Casino Activists Dropped

Today the “Philly Hourteen” went before Judge Jesse Solomon. The 14 members of Casino-Free Philadelphia were each charged with “disorderly conduct” for a civil disobedience action they took on December 11th, as part of Operation Transparency.

The goal of Operation Transparency was to seek the release of public documents which the PA Gaming Control Board had kept secret. The documents included updated traffic plans and revenue projections. Many of them still have not been released.

We asked, for example, if the revenue is so important -- why not make the information showing the projections to be public? Besides, it’s the public’s right to know.

The Gaming Control Board refused us access to the documents, and even access to their public office. Fourteen of us were arrested while attempting to gain access in our planned civil disobedience action.

In the end, the Judge agreed with our attempts and our right to get the information.

In defense of democracy and on First Amendment principles, the judge declared all of us NOT GUILTY. He then went on to

On February 7, the public hearing for the bill was held at City Hall. AABRA and community members attended to voice their concerns and were shocked to see a room packed full of Westrum supporters. As the hearing began, however, it became clear that Westrum had provided many of the statements and foamcore signs that people held. The statements delivered had nearly identical beginnings and closings and some who spoke mispronounced words they had supposedly written.

The first proposed ITD, layed out in a second bill written by Councilman Clarke, would impact Brewerytown, between 30th, 32nd, Girard and Oxford. This is not AABRA or Brewerytown’s first run in with Clarke. The Songhai Cultural Center at 3117 Master Street, currently surrounded on all sides by the proposed ITD’s, was won by the community after a hell of a fight with Westrum, whom Clarke allowed to sieze Songhai.

For the actual text of the bills (their numbers are 060902 and 060901), visit:
<http://tinyurl.com/3djrhp> and <http://tinyurl.com/39khj4>

Rather than reading anarchist newspapers while drinking soy lattes and talking about how much gentrification sucks, why not give the city council a call and let them know what you think:

All Councilpersons: 215-686-1776
Darrell Clarke: 215-686-3442

For more info and updates, see:
allforthetaking.org



Philadelphia jail declared inhumane

By the Blanketman

January 26, 2007- Federal Judge Barclay Surrick declared conditions in the Philadelphia Prison System and police detention facilities inhumane in a lawsuit filed by the prisoners. The lawsuit focused on brutal conditions in the initial stages of a prisoner’s processing in the holding cells of police stations, the Police Administration Building, and the jail’s Intake Housing Units, and the overall crowding in the system- currently over 8,600 prisoners in a system built for 5,600. Overcrowding becomes even worse when the prison population surges during the summer months

“The conditions include unsanitary and unavailable toilet facilities, the lack of soap, warm water, and personal hygiene materials, the lack of beds and bedding, deliberate indifference to the medical needs of detainees, the lack of fire safety protection for detainees ... and the placing of [inmates] in holding cells ... in numbers far exceeding the capacity of the cells.” Judge Surrick wrote in his opinion. “The city has been aware of the prison overcrowding problem for years and has failed to take the steps needed to provide for an ever-increasing prison population. The

city is also aware that the prison population typically spikes during the summer months. That circumstance will undoubtedly occur in May or June of this year. Considering the fact that the [prisons are] already at or near capacity, when the spike occurs, or perhaps even before, the options will be limited.”

Judge Surrick ordered the city to submit a plan to fix the problems in a timely manner. He also prohibited keeping prisoners in police, criminal justice center, or the Police Administration Building holding cells more than 10 hours past their preliminary arraignment. Arraignments are supposed to take place within 24 hours of arrest, but can extend to up to three days at times. Judge Surrick said that if the overcrowding is not addressed by the summer months, that he might order prisoner releases.

David Rudovsky, local civil rights attorney who represented the prisoners, praised the judge’s decision and said that the city has ignored these problems for years. City Solicitor Romulo Diaz said that the city has been working on these issues and that the City of Philadelphia has not decided whether or not to appeal the judge’s decision.

Two More People Say Mumia Confessed?

by Hans Bennett
This article can be viewed in full on www.defenestrator.org



A Dec. 8 NBC 10 story reported that two more people now say that they heard Abu-Jamal confess at the hospital before treatment for his gunshot wound.

NBC 10 reports that on Dec. 9, 1981 William Colarulo (now a Chief Inspector for the Philadelphia police) was a “rookie cop assigned to guard the door to the emergency room.” Colarulo told NBC 10 that after Abu-Jamal arrived at the hospital, he confessed to his then partner Tom Brady. “He said to my partner something to the effect, ‘I’m glad I shot the M-F’. That’s what my partner said (Abu-Jamal) told him,” said Colarulo.

The second new account from that morning comes from Kathleen Gerrow. Now an executive producer at NBC 10, Gerrow was a radio reporter in 1981 covering the story at the hospital. “I distinctly remember a very distinctive voice shouting, ‘I shot the mother f---er, I shot the mother f---er,’” said Gerrow.

Pam Africa told The Defenestrator that these two new accounts show that the pro-execution lobby “is getting desperate. While these new accounts are supposed to strengthen the case against Mumia, it actually further exposes the confession story for what it is: a fraud. In 1982 it was unbelievable that police forgot about the confession for two months, Now we’re supposed to believe that it took 25 years for these new people to remember it?”

Africa emphasizes that these new accounts come just months before the Third Circuit Court of Appeals will hear oral arguments and then decide if Abu-Jamal deserves a new trial. The FOP and other pro-execution forces “are scared that Mumia will get a new trial and years of injustice will be exposed. This is a desperate attempt to sway public opinion against Mumia.”

Hans Bennett is an anarchist and and photo-journalist documenting the movement to free Mumia and all political prisoners. His his new website is: insubordination.blogspot.com

LOVE Philly: Bring Our Money Home! SUSTAIN Launches Tax-Day Campaign

by Kate Zaidan and Nava Et Shalom

Like any international solidarity organizing, Palestine solidarity activists face the challenge of making our struggle relevant to those who are not personally touched by the occupation. Often, we stop at intellectual arguments: US imperialism plunders the globe at the expense of our communities. Slogans and signs that read “Stop the War at Home and the War Abroad” frequent anti-war rallies.

The atrocities that face Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq are not so different than those that face poor people and people of color in Philadelphia. If we are to truly situate Palestinian self-determination in the framework of ending global apartheid, our work must eliminate the conditions that make the oppression of the Palestinian people legitimate. To that end, our work must reflect our commitment to our communities.

Philly-SUSTAIN (Stop US Tax Aid to Israel Now) has grappled with developing tangible means to build our movements together, to unite under the umbrella of eliminating racism, classism and all of its manifestations, and to foster a sense of mutuality amongst the Palestine solidarity movement and community-based organizing in Philly. If we’re going to win on our issues, we will need each other to do it. And if we want radical social change and not band-aid solutions, our unity is imperative.

One outcome of a long process of reflection and strategizing is the launch of a tax day campaign called LOVE PHILLY: Bring Our Money Home. This four-month campaign connects what our tax dollars destroy in Palestine with what they could build in Philadelphia.

Right now, billions of dollars each year go from U.S. taxpayers to the Israeli military, funding the destruction of Palestinian homes, agriculture, and infrastructure. In the meantime, Philadelphians face crises around health-care, housing, and education. LOVE PHILLY will raise awareness in Philadelphia about where our tax dollars are going and where they’re not going, the violence they’re funding

and the positive change they could make if they were redirected to fund our city’s needs.

We will partner with community-based organizations in an effort to redirect the money spent on war, death and occupation, towards the needs of the people. We will support local organizing through publicity events, public art; teach-ins; letter-writing parties; web-based outreach; banner drops; and public service announcements on the radio and TV. This is just the beginning-as we make connections and build relationships with organizations, our work will take shape based on the needs of the local organizers.

The campaign’s first event will be a Valentine’s Day letter-writing party at Kaffa Krossing on 44th and Chestnut. On February 13th from 6-9, we will write letters to Philadelphia’s mayoral candidates, asking them to stand in solidarity with LOVE PHILLY’s demands that Philadelphians’ tax dollars come back to fund the city’s needs instead of funding violence and occupation in Palestine. Join us to learn more about the campaign, meet others who are interested, and spread the word about where our tax money is and isn’t going.

It will always be a challenge to connect the local to global, to organize outside of the constraints of single-issue politics, and to deconstruct the systemic racism and classism endemic to global solidarity movements. This is the first step in long process of supporting the movement building work that already exists in Philadelphia. A mutually-supportive movement that is built in the spirit of redistributing wealth and power in this country and globally is a force of vision and hope, and SUSTAIN is excited to join the ranks of those who are working toward that goal.

To get involved in SUSTAIN or to connect a group you work with on this campaign, contact us at sustainphilly@gmail.com or 267-455-9279. Keep checking the SUSTAIN Philly blog at <http://sustainphilly.blogspot.com> for a LOVE PHILLY petition and action updates leading up to April 15.



Interview: ‘Stop VX Nerve Gas Dumping in the Delaware’

By Caryn Hunt | 11.04.2006

VX nerve gas is one of the most lethal chemicals ever devised by man. A drop on human skin will kill a person within minutes. As a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Treaty in 1997, the U.S. agreed to dispose of the deadly substance. The U.S. Army has plans to dump large quantities of VX nerve gas waste product into the Delaware River. It intends to treat the compound before releasing it into the water, but no one knows what effect this might have on the ecosystem that depends on the Delaware. These plans have been halted temporarily through the lobbying efforts of elected officials from states along the river. What is the next step? I interviewed Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director of Delaware Riverkeeper, via email for more information.

CH: Can you describe your organization’s origin and mission? How broad an area do you serve?

TC: We are a nonprofit membership organization with 7000 members throughout the Delaware River Watershed- from the headwaters in the Catskill Mountains in New York State and the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania, through New Jersey and the Delaware Estuary and Bay to Delaware and the Atlantic Ocean. We formed in 1988 and were the first Riverkeeper project that organized after the founding of the Hudson Riverkeeper. Riverkeepers across the nation and internationally are organized into the Waterkeeper Alliance, dedicated to protecting rivers and water.

CH: Can you describe the current situation concerning VX dumping? What is VX poison? What are its predicted and/or possible effects on the river? How did it come to be slated for dumping in the Delaware?

TC: The U.S. Army is proposing to transport 1,269 tons of VX nerve agent waste from its Newport Indiana facility where it is now stored across the country to the Dupont Chambers Works facility at Carney’s Point, Salem County, NJ where it would be put through their hazardous waste plant, with the effluent discharged into the Delaware River. The waste, known as hydrolysate, would be carried by tank truck over public highways for over 1000 miles, through 4 states, 2 to 3 tank trucks per day for 2 to 3 years. The effluent that would be discharged into the Delaware River (and the hydrolysate that would be transported) would contain toxic components and may contain live VX,

since the material would only be tested to a detection limit of 20 ppb (parts per billion- one ppb is one microgram per liter). Live VX and other dangerous biologically active compounds could be in the waste up to just under 20 ppb. The effect of these highly dangerous ingredients on fish, wildlife, and the small critters that live on the bottom of the river is not known. Only a small test has been done by Dupont on one batch of the hydrolysate and the test results were inconclusive, according to critics.

According to an Ohio EPA study, VX at a level of 20 ppb after 17.4 hours killed half of the striped bass exposed. As a result of this and numerous other concerns, an agency toxicologist “strongly recommended” against discharge of treated VX hydrolysate into the river there until there was “more information about the possible toxic effects of the treated hydrolysate discharge on aquatic life”. (Interoffice Memo from John F. Estenick, DSW, Toxics Advisor, Subject Treated VX Hydrolysate Discharge Recommendation Technical Report, October 10, 2003, Ohio EPA)

VX nerve agent is the most potent chemical weapon ever created. One drop on the skin will kill a person in minutes. There is

enough VX stockpiled in the U.S. to kill every person on the planet 500 times over. The United States agreed in 1997 when the Chemical Weapons Treaty was signed with other nations, to destroy VX and all other chemical weapons. Only a small amount has been destroyed so far.

CH: Can you describe the alternative to the Army’s current plans? What is the procedure they followed in Indiana? Does this seem to be the best solution?

TC: It is our position that the Army should revert back to its original plan to treat and dispose of the VX Nerve Agent on site, at the Newport, Indiana facility, as was planned in the late ‘90s. The Newport, Indiana community has been vocal in supporting this option and through an advisory committee worked for many years with the Army, scientists and chemical weapons experts on devising a safe and effective process acceptable to all; the state of Indiana has permitted it.

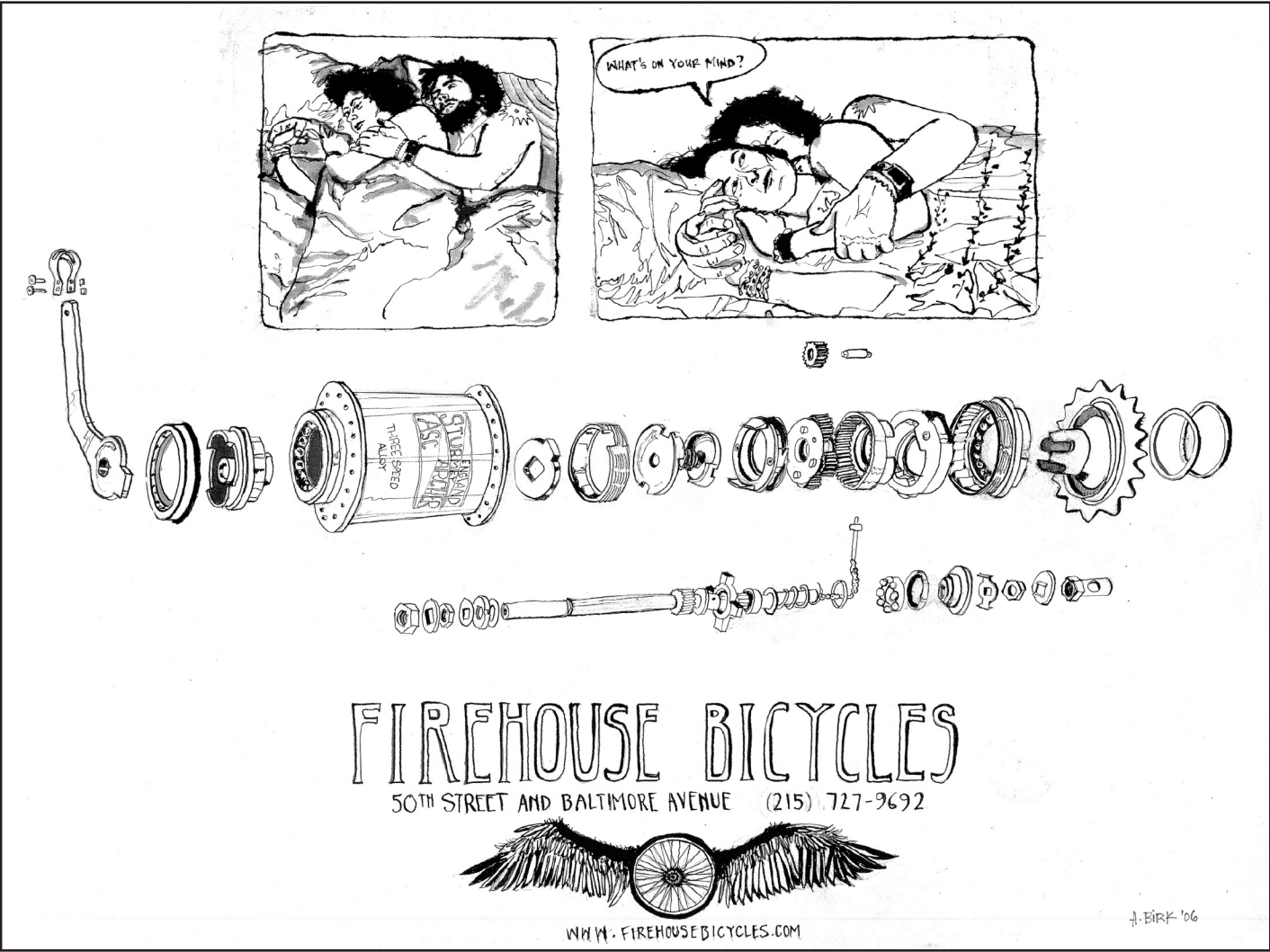
Supercritical water oxidation (SCWO), the approved system, is a more environmentally safe means of destruction and does not require incineration (eliminating air pollution) or discharge to a waterway (eliminating VX waste effluent). There are also other known alternative systems

that can be used on site in Newport. On site destruction avoids the dangers that accompany the transport of VX hydrolysate which contains toxic constituents and can contain any amount under 20 ppb of VX nerve agent. It also avoids the discharge of effluent to a waterway.

Apparently, the Army and Dupont feel they can get approval to dump VX waste here. When President Bush abruptly changed course and decided not to pursue SCWO at Newport, the Army said that it would be quicker and cheaper to send it to an already existing plant. They tried to send it to Ohio but it was defeated by public opposition. Now the public outcry here in the Delaware River Watershed and in the states that would be exposed to the dangers of the trucking (Pennsylvania has the most miles that would be exposed, along Route 80) have halted the plan temporarily. Elected officials, Congressmen, NJ and Delaware Governors and many towns and thousands of people have come out against the proposal.

The transport of VX hydrolysate has been suspended for 60 days while the GAO conducts a costs- benefits analysis. They will also compare the methods of dispos-

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Democracy for Lifers

by John Alford & Kristi Brian

On October 7, Fight For Lifers, Inc. of Philadelphia (FFL) hosted the “Democracy for Lifers” community event. The event took place at Temple University and focused on four major themes—the sentencing of juveniles to life without parole (LWOP), the commutation process, the post conviction appeals process and the SCI Graterford Lifers’ Public Safety Initiative.

Attorney Marsha Levick was the first presenter of the day. Ms. Levick shared her experiences working on the Simmons v. Roper Supreme Court decision that determined the death penalty to be disproportionate and “cruel and unusual” punishment for juveniles. Ms. Levick spoke about the parallels that should be drawn between this decision and the question of life sentences for juveniles. She pointed out that Pennsylvania is maintaining the highest rate of sentencing juveniles to LWOP in the United States. She also emphasized that the United States is one of only a handful of countries that sentences juveniles to LWOP. These points reflecting the very backward nature of the United States criminal justice system and its treatment of juveniles (especially in PA) were echoed in an excellent essay submitted for the October 7th event by William DeMascio. Ms. Levick and DeMascio are united on the fact that juvenile LWOP is a serious violation of human rights, a point which is confirmed by the fact that the sentence is forbidden by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which the United States refuses to ratify.

Levick’s presentation was followed by attorney Angus Love’s remarks on the commutation process. Angus spoke about the legal/political obstacles facing inmates seeking commutation in Pennsylvania and the work being done to combat these injustices. He also encouraged the group to continue pressuring legislators to act on the SR 149 effort to legislate a life *with parole* option in sentencing and to legislate parole eligibility after 25 years served or at age 50. He urged FFL to gain the support of the Pennsylvania Black Caucus to push this legislation forward.

Next, Dan Silverman Esq. gave an energetic and informative presentation about the post conviction appeals process. Silverman broke down the process, mapped out how the courts handle Post Conviction Relief Act (PCRA) and offered legal advice on how best to use one’s resources when seeking Post Conviction Relief. Although Silverman’s presentation did not directly address the need to reverse the one-year time bar that has been placed on the PCRA, FFL is working to design a strategy to reverse this PCRA amendment that limits all prisoners’ access to the courts. Dan Silverman has generously offered to answer any initial legal questions that FFL members have. Contact FFL (Philly or Pittsburgh) to pose your specific inquiry to Mr. Silverman.

The final presentation before the lunch break was a lively and inspiring discussion of the SCI Graterford Lifers’ Public Safety Initiative (PSI). Yayah Shabazz was a participant in the PSI project during his incarceration at Graterford. Shabazz and Kay Harris, a Temple University criminal justice professor, discussed the important contribution that the PSI offers for both the active transformation of incarcerated individuals as well as the project’s potential to positively reduce the culture of pow-

erlessness and the resulting crime that plagues poor communities. The Graterford Lifers are working hard and in very creative ways to counteract the dehumanizing culture that young men and women are getting caught up in both inside and outside of prison.

After lunch, Teya Sepinuck offered a DVD presentation of excerpts from TOVA’s performances pieces, “Living With Life” and “Beyond the Walls.” These performances by Lifers currently imprisoned and by family members who have lost loved ones to crime and to prison were presented alongside moving interviews with Lifers and family members of Lifers.

The day wrapped up around 5 p.m. with a Next Steps presentation by Nyanza Bandlee and Hakim Ali. They outlined tangible ways to move forward. They stressed the importance of building community around our common struggles with the Prison Industrial Complex and the importance of electoral politics. They discussed proposed strategies, which include face-to-face visits with legislators to produce “Report Cards” in order to publicly expose the positions and actions (or lack thereof) taken by these elected officials. The “speak out” that followed the Next Steps discussion, allowed audience members to stand and acknowledge their loved ones locked down and to speak to the struggles they are facing within the system. These moving comments evidenced the harsh social and political realities we are facing, conveying the urgent need for us to become united and hold those in power accountable for the oppressive conditions they are maintaining through anti-human capital-driven policies.

The conference was a success in terms of content but failed to draw the number of people we need. Although only about 50 people were in attendance, we have had increased numbers at our organizing meetings since the event. As follow up to the event, FFL has been holding “living room” meetings in members’ homes. Our strategy is to do this work in our private homes in order to get more family members and neighbors involved in this struggle. Together we are reading the latest research and political theories on imprisonment, planning strategies to build coalitions and most importantly listening and learning from each other as we share ideas and envision greater liberation.

In closing, the words of Huey P. Newton seem relevant: “The ideas that can and will sustain our movement for total freedom and dignity of the people cannot be imprisoned, for they are to be found in the people, all the people, wherever they are.”

Hopefully, by the time our next conference rolls around, the living room strategies that have allowed us to share our dignity and our challenges will have developed into effective forces for change.

Please join our monthly meetings the second Tuesday of every month at the AFSC building—1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia. For more information call Reconstruction/ Fight For Lifers 215-223-8180

Newton, Huey P. January 3, 1970. Prison, where is thy victory? From the Huey P. Newton Reader. Edited by David Hillard. New York: Seven Stories Press.

Ursula Rucker: From Supa Sista to Ma’at Mama

Ursula Rucker: From Supa Sista to Ma’at Mama Philly spoken-word artist, hip-hop visionary and moral conscience, she of the beautiful, room-quieting voice, Ursula Rucker, chose Egyptian goddess Ma’at for her latest incarnation and hip-hop, c-d out-ing. Ma’at, goddess of truth, balance and universal order is a fitting spirit for Rucker’s embodiment. Irritating to some (which she seems quite fine with) for her sometimes-scathing critiques of materialistic, violent, misogynistic, pro-capitalist rap artists - the new shuck and jivers - (put lyrics from Supa sista here) (Ma’at might condemn such soullessness to the underworld for encouraging chaos and disharmony, transgressing for the sake of profit, rather than seeking healthy transformation), wise and necessary to others, Rucker always hits nerves, confronting and encouraging questioning and revelations. “Ma’at Mama,” is more souly, jazzy



“terry cloth kangols in crayola colors, smell double-mint and juicy fruit on b-boy breath...when hip-hop was life.” As always, there are plenty of words for women and children. The c-d kicks off with “Humbled” a tune she shares with mentor/teacher Sonia Sanchez, who accompanied her at a c-d release party at Robin’s bookstore last year; the words are raw, acknowledging the sometimes harshness of nature that both humbles and reveals, the artist cleansing before creation. “White cloud rivers run through me, I felt them pass through my bones, through liver and lung and stomach, washed me into the big white cloud lake, but I floated right between fear and mountains.” “Rant (Hot in Here)” (is she referring to hell/the underworld? global warming?) spits out the world’s ills, our “castle at the bottom of the universe where everything’s for sale”: the music industry’s “lack of artistry,” Clear Channel, War, Abu Ghraib, AIDs, Fallujah, Capitalism, Gun Control...and “oh yeah I forgot...sodomy... cause we all bein’ fucked in the ass right now...”. It’s a call for revolution “the castle walls must come down...let’s get it started... become a pro at being anti to dis-bullshit.” “I Ain’t (Yo Punk Ass Bitch)” and “Poon Tang Clan” are assertions of black female strength against media portrayals and disrespectful males: “See, Poon Tang, that’s

just a play on words, it makes light of all the stereotypes that have created our pseudo-sex hype, yes, we’re women and black, but not simply wet nurses or coochies...or... topless whores waiting on continent’s shore to become new world versions of beasts of burden.” “I Ain’t...” will resonate with any woman who’s felt less than equal in a serious love relationship: “I m tired of the anonymity, like nickels on corners in white tees, I got a name, I am somebody, not just someone’s mama or main-squeeze...I ain’t your holla black girl.” The song pushes through the pain and difficulty of renouncing unfulfilling love in order to dance again. “Children’s Poem” addresses the contuing legacy of racism, the smugness of white liberal do-gooders - “you ain’t nothing but the plantation mistress, wearing America’s corset pulled way to tight” - and the general mistreatment and lack of concern for children in our culture. Rucker is, after all the mama of four boys.” So many sons and daughters get drive by’d, video-ho’d, pedifiled, mainstreamed, short-changed, murdered, molested, misunderstood.” “What we gonna do?” she asks, sticking it in our face where it should be. It might be easier, more of an escape, to jiggle to “Candyshop” or grin at Akon’s ode to easy women “Smack

That,” to exult in the male posturing and boasting that may seem like an alternative power to the status quo (but too often merely mimics it), but the world Rucker describes will still stew beneath that surface of cool invulnerability. And she is right, that we can’t ignore it if we truly want to build a foundation of universal order and balance - until we do chaos and disorder will reign. Some might say Rucker needs to lighten up, is too sensitive to this world, but she has always been sincere in her truth-seeking no matter how ugly or painful. In a recent interview, Rucker explains how “Stuff kind of blindsides me. You know, I’ll just be sitting there and somebody will say something or something will come across on the TV or I’ll see a headline and it’s just like a punch in the face, and then I can’t let it go.” She doesn’t write just to rant, but for the note she ends on. The final, optimistic track “L.O.V.E.” sees a possible future filled with it: “You know, love that has been worked on, like gardens and term papers, love that has been nurtured, like children...it will be beautiful, it will win blue ribbons and everything, folks will come from far and wide to see it.” But not if we don’t cultivate it.

THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

by Robert 12X Holbrook

In Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega, the former guerrilla leader of the Sandinista Movement and one-time president in the 1980’s has been swept back into the presidency; not at the head of a guerrilla column but through elections and popular support. In Bolivia, Evo Morales, a former cocoa farmer from the Indian highlands of Bolivia is elected president and with large popular support nationalized the Bolivian oil industry and returns more of the proceeds to the poor. They join Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez in checking Amerikkkan imperialism and interference in Latin America. Brazil and Ecuador also have popularly elected leftist governments that have checked Amerikkkan plans to turn all of Latin America into a free trade zone, rejecting Amerikkkan neoliberal policies in the region. Even Chile, historically a staunch Amerikkkan ally, is ruled by a socialist government lukewarm to Amerikkkan plans.

In the Middle East Amerikkka’s goal of importing its “democratic ambitions” has been inverted with elections in Lebanon, Palestine, and Egypt empowering governments and movements opposed to Amerikkkan interference. In Lebanon Hezbollah defeated an Israeli invasion and is now the power broker in Lebanon with massive support throughout Lebanon’s religious communities. Amerikkkan and Israeli allies in Lebanon have been forced to distance themselves from Amerikkkan goals and ambitions. In Egypt, despite government repression by Amerikkkan-backed dictator Hosni Mubarak, the banned Muslim Brotherhood won over 80 seats in parliament and would be voted into power if free elections were held. Their success and popular support resulted in Mubarak suspending further elections for two years.

In occupied Palestine the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas shocked the world and won the latest Palestinian elections, stunning the Amerikkkans and Israelis who are now forced to sup-

Philadelphia Demonstration Joins International Protests to Shut Down Guantanamo Prison Camp

by Steve Eckardt

Philadelphia Demonstration Joins International Protests to Shut Down Guantanamo Prison Camp Some 40 demonstrators gathered at the Federal courthouse on January



A new Era in Revolutionary Struggle

port the corrupt movement they previously labeled “irrelevant.” In addition they cut all foreign aid to Occupied Palestine as retribution towards the Palestinian people for exercising their right to choose their own government. In Jordan the pro-Amerikkkan punk King Abdullah refuses to hold elections because, in his own words, it would bring the Muslim Brotherhood to power, and would damage Jordanian-Amerikkkan relations. Actually, it would remove an Amerikkkan puppet and give power to a movement opposed to Amerikkka. In Iraq a popular resistance has stifled the once invincible Amerikkkan military. Amerikkans can do nothing but die in Iraq.

In Nepal a Maoist guerrilla movement has been swept up in a popular uprising that forced the corrupt monarchy to resign. The guerrillas have moved into a popularly supported transitional government, ending their 10-year insurgency.

From the Horn of Africa to South America popular uprisings and movements are gaining ground and removing Amerikkkan-backed regimes from power. All these movements have some form of populism in common.

It is often assumed that revolutions are led by professional revolutionaries whose duty would be to manufacture revolution. The end of the Cold War has changed that thinking, rendering “vanguard” revolutionary movements obsolete. The future of revolutionary struggle will be popular and decentralized rebellions.

Two revolutionary movements on opposite sides of the world have inspired the oppressed, showing that struggle and resistance is possible in the post-Cold War world. Opposition to capitalism and imposed “democracy” no longer seem impossible. In 1994 the Zapatistas stormed out of the mountains and seized a portion of Chiapas, introducing the world to de-centralized revolutionary com-

mittees that actually placed power in the hands of the people and communities, rather than bureaucrats and ideologues. Here was a whole community, from bottom to top committed to revolution, a true popular movement. The Mexican government could not crush it through force of arms and reluctantly came to a peace agreement. While all the Zapatista’s goals have not been achieved their future is still in their control.

In the Gaza strip, the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas initiated an armed struggle against Israeli settlers that culminated in the 1999-2003 2nd Intifada. The de-centralized structure of Hamas political and military wings prevented Israel from destroying the movement despite a lethal assassination campaign, culminating in the 2004 assassination of Hamas’s founder and spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. The assassinations only strengthened Hamas and increased its popular support.

This explains Hamas’s overwhelming electoral victory in 2006 and their refusal to renounce armed struggle or recognize Israel as long as the occupation continues. These two movements, one secular, one religious, have redefined revolutionary struggle in the 21st century.

“Populism” appears to be the only way to challenge Amerikkkan oppression. Populism swings both ways and has produced its share of dictators and tyrants, but so has many a revolution been undermined by a dictator or tyrant coming to power in the name of the people. Like all movements populism will and can be used by both revolutionary and reactionary forces contending for power. In all contests it will be up to the people to ensure that the principles and demands of the people are upheld and power is de-centralized. There are many who want to cling to their centralized concept of revolutionary parties and ideologies in the name of the people, obsolete relics from a bygone era.

dozen locales including, most prominently, the protest at the gates of Guantanamo itself led by Cindy Sheehan and two mothers of prisoners.

The protest in Cuba received wide international coverage including a page-four Philadelphia Inquirer eyewitness AP dispatch from the island that included mention of the Philadelphia demonstration. The local demonstration concluded with a brief rally that heard from leaders of the Brandywine Peace Community and the ACLU along with a compelling report by a major Philadelphia law firm attorney representing one detainee. The attorney reported that his assertedly-blameless client -swept up and sold for a \$5,000 bounty in Afghanistan- was told he would be freed if he took a lie detector test. The detainee agreed, adding only one condition: that the interrogation include 11 questions that only he knew the answer to. Washington’s jailers refused to allow this reliability test and the man is still in Guantanamo lockdown without trial, habeus corpus, or the lie detector test that would prove his innocence.

for more info contact Philly@CubaSolidarity.com

Philadelphia Combat Zones

by dave onion

All over the news end of November last year was the murder of Sean Bell by the NYPD. It was his wedding night and the unarmed Bell was gunned down by 50 shots from plain-clothes police. But as the year (which was one of Philadelphia’s deadliest) was coming to a close, Philly cops had already put an end to the lives of 20 Philadelphians. 2006 marked the deadliest year at the hands of cops since 1980. We currently boast the deadliest police force of all big cities in the US with more killings than New York City, which has 13 times the population.

Just minutes into 2007, as fireworks and celebratory (for once) gunshots thundered through our neighborhoods, Philly cops took another life. 20 year old Bryan Jones was shot dead by cops in Overbrook, reportedly responding to New Years revelers who had shot at a cruiser. Jones was unarmed and by all accounts not in any way involved in the gunfire.

At 2am on January 14th, a man with a knife on 9th and Market was shot and killed after allegedly yelling “Kill Me!” at police. Though the number of bullets weren’t reported, there was no doubt a plentiful barrage. A man in a parked car nearby was also hit and wounded, but survived. Seemingly without a trace of irony our local news outlets featured experts discussing “Suicide by Cop” as a mental health disorder.

January 17 another man was killed by police after an armed robbery.

January 20th, cops killed unarmed 16 year old Tyron Sparks while responding to a robbery in northeast Philadelphia. Police later told press that Sparks had first pulled a sawed off shotgun, but no gun was found on him. It turned out that Sparks also had nothing to do with the robbery.

State violence aside, last year’s violence, measuring over 400 in murders in Philadelphia was itself a powerful resonator of a more generalized violence. The popular violence on Philly streets coincides with an increase of spectacular violence (violence portrayed on the media), a continuing increase in prison population (still disproportionately high compared to increases in anti-social violence or legal crime, still racially disproportionate to crimes committed). It happens to coincide with the continuing polarization of already disparate wealth and resources. And it’s virtually impossible to ignore the increase in the systemic globalization of state violence as we see it devastate Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and elsewhere.

Predictably, the violence also coincides with numerous opportunistic proposals by politicians for alarming increases in repression and social control. The Day after MLK Day, Ex-City Councilman Michael Nutter, presumably as part of his mayoral campaign, proposed declaring a “State of Emergency” in order to allow police to randomly search and frisk in areas with high-crime. Read poor neighborhoods; in Philly read black and poor neighborhoods. Nutter even defended himself in the press by using Bush’s post 911 retractions of basic freedoms as acceptable precedents for his own mini version of the Patriot Act.

State Rep Chakka Fattah, another mayoral candidate goes even farther. In addition to providing the funds for police to increase their numbers as much as THEY (yes the police) feel is necessary, he suggests the city should install 1,000 surveillance cameras in hot-spots and communities with high crime rates, something current mayor Street is already implementing on a smaller scale. This would include “forensic imaging technology”, ie. cameras equipped with computer software to identify people in public based on their facial structure and could identify whether someone is carrying a gun from their posture. Another part of Fattah’s proposal is to “Collaborate with Businesses to Make Their Surveillance Camera Footage Available to the Philadelphia Police Department.”

Fattah’s plan sounds conspicuously inspired by that of DARPA’s Combat Zones That See (CTS), a project intended to be implemented in Baghdad and other urban combat zones. CTS is a network of thousands of surveillance cameras, which like the Fattah proposal are plugged into a computer system capable of reading license plates, recognizing faces and matching them with information already in their “terrorist databases”. CTS uses software which can also trace the paths of individuals and cars throughout a city. DARPA’s budget estimate for 2007 puts aside almost nine million dollars specifically for developing and testing CTS.

Ironically CTS doesn’t seem to have been implemented in Baghdad so far. Here in our own combat zone, Philly would be among the trailblazers in such social control. Philly’s deadliest year in recent history is just the sort of local September 11th needed to make social control nightmares like these real.

Other mayoral candidates are more or less in the same boat. State rep Dwight Evans wants to bring back John Timoney (Phila police commissioner when Philly cops beat and arrested over 400 anti-Bush and anti-prison protesters) to deal with the violence in his own famous style. Tom Knox also sees flooding Philly with cops as a good thing for our city. Of course there’s been some lip service to social causes of crime amongst ap-

peals for increasing fascism, but these are in essence just asides; none of the plans have any serious positive social component.

There’s no doubt that there is a crisis. On top of last years victims of the decentered generalized street warfare thousands of mostly young black men were locked up in a prison system which has no apparent effect in controlling anti-social violence while police killed a record number of poor Philadelphians. There are of course connections between all of this. Even Mayor Street commented on the connections between the Philly and Iraq combat zones earlier this month. But I’m standing here on Lancaster Ave. Here where commodity culture, neglect, racism and class war have for years sowed seeds of human devaluation, desperation, poverty; where opportunity and capital dangles lures of comfort and wealth out of reach just blocks away; where prison is just a fact of life, it’s not hard to see this violence as part of an overarching network.

Let’s face it, violence is being increasingly normalized. Fear and violence is valuable official currency and it’s increasingly accepted. And this makes for some hard questions. For one, how does one go about stopping a war waged by a state against a people. We have the war as waged by the Pentagon in the middle east and we have our combat zones right here in the form of poverty, the criminal justice system here at home.. In the case of our government’s global wars, we have faces, institutions where we can point fingers; perhaps wage our own war against wars. But it’s a different matter with a generalized social spread of violence. One could see our Philly combat zones as product of cultural virus, brought to poor neighborhoods like the smallpox infested blankets offered to Native Americans by white settlers. Instead of smallpox we have a capitalist infested culture that spreads dehumanization and cravings for a blinding vast poverty of products and capitalist status symbols. It’s a culture that turns potential social creativity into profit for elites, turns rebellion into vicious competition (that often openly mimics the competition we see in “legitimate” capitalism).

It will take a creative



struggle to turn this around. And though often drowned out by politicians visions for social control or religious tunnel vision, we’ve also seen a year of community action from across the political spectrum. In November anti-war and anti-poverty groups joined forces for a “March Under the El” to bring the wasted resources from the war to light as well as make solid connections between the Iraq war and the poverty which fuels a good deal of the violence in Philly. Uhuru has consistently called attention to killings by police. Groups like Men United for a Better Philadelphia have taken to the streets offering some alternatives in their neighborhoods. We’ve seen Stop the Violence dance parties and Hip Hop events, the Spiral Q puppet theater brought the message to last year’s Peoplehood parade. Among the most interesting events to read about was largely organized by the Lifers United Community Action Network, a group of Lifers at Graterford prison. The group managed to hold a live Satellite broadcast event” dubbed the Return of the Missing Men, where prisoners addressed Philly teens gathered at a Union Hall about the need to create communities that are safe. We should see this struggle as a social struggle that goes beyond any sort of politics we see descend on us from city hall (or the Pentagon).

It definitely takes all sorts to to get out of a mess like this. But it will also take more than “educational opportunities” or other methods of assimilating so much street rage into more legitimate forms of mutual abuse. No mayor can snuff out Philly rage with any sort of social control program. If a real alternative could be derailing this rage from its current capitalist forms into a rich social rebellion; a transformation of competitive capitalist logic into social solidarity and mutual aid; guns keeping cops from dragging off our brothers and sisters to prison instead of being used for the current collective suicide...

... well that’s any mayors biggest nightmare. Let’s bring it on.

Recovering from TV Culture

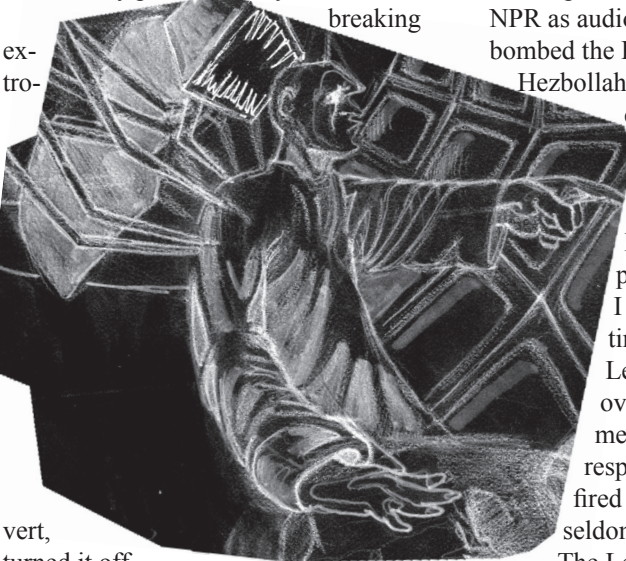
by Colin Cascia

I was in a hospital for a while (long story involving an autoimmune disorder, pills, blood transfusions, a bad surgeon, more pills etc.) where I was immersed in the culture of television. I didn’t want it to happen, but being stuck in an all white, 20’x20’ room, fucked up on painkillers and not allowed to eat for a month made the escape of TV land very appealing.

I plunged into the alternate universe where violence is humor, sex is horror, freedom is slavery, ignorance is knowledge and war is peace, and came out slightly scarred and hung over.

I saw the war Israel launched on Lebanon. Two days after the fighting started, I sat in my doctor’s waiting room, watching the violence unfold on the brand new looking TV set that stood in the corner, surrounded on either side by tables piled high with people, better homes and AARP newsletters. I was undoubtedly the youngest patient in the room by at least 35 years, an odd and unhealthy feeling. My partner and my mom were with me.

No one else seemed to be paying too much attention to the CNN footage loop of Hezbollah marching infinitesimally forward and the rising smoke from explosions over Beirut. I struggled to read a book with mild frustration; my concentration derailed every ten seconds by the eruption of bombs and ranting of idiots. However, always the law-abiding introvert, I heeded the hand made sign that sat atop the television: Please DO NOT touch the TV. My partner, always the rule-breaking



extro-
vert, turned it off, pissing off the receptionist. She then said to me, “Nobody in here needs to see that shit.” The night before my surgery the battle raged on, this time on Fox news as Sean Hannity declared with his chiseled featured confidence that this was the beginning of World

War Three, opening fire on Iran for their support of Hezbollah. It seemed as though this would become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

I listened to Mort Zuckerman, owner of the Daily News, continually refer to Israel as “we” and “us.” “We’re after Hezbollah, after what they did to us.” It was as if both him and his interviewer, who seemed to be present not so much to ask questions but to facilitate Zuckerman’s assault on the Arab world, neglected to acknowledge that Israel is another country, thousands of miles away.

I saw the Israeli security expert (whatever that means) speaking about “radical” Islamic beliefs of the rapture. I wonder if he knew that most of his audience believes that he’s going to burn in hell when Jesus returns for not having water dumped on his head when he was an infant.

Throughout all the coverage of the violence, I do not recall seeing an Arab person speak even once.

Now every jackass pundit and talk show host was predicting WWII (apparently all of them forgot about a forty year period of history called the “Cold” War).

The first night after my surgery as I lay struggling to breathe with tubes sticking into some uncomfortable places and out of my head beyond belief from the dilauden (basically medical heroin, five times the strength of morphine) the TV came on because of an electrical fluke with the nurse’s call button. It was set to the hospital’s information channel with NPR as audio. The Israeli air force had bombed the Beirut airport, prompting Hezbollah rocket attacks that killed a civilian in Jerusalem. This was all I could gather before I passed out.

It was through this haze of painkillers and daydreams that I witnessed the carnage continue. The bombs devastated Lebanon as the IDF marched over rubble. With each hammering of Beirut, the Hezbollah responded with scores of rockets fired into Jerusalem, which seldom seemed to find their mark. The Lebanese civilians felt the war the most. Every day there was a Mosque in ruins or a hospital that Israeli bombers targeted “accidentally.” A photo I saved from a local newspaper shows a Lebanese man carrying a Jesus statue back into his church. Israeli soldiers who occupied his church for 16 days moved it outside.

Then, as suddenly appeared to have dropped almost out of the media withing of a cease-fire. No mention of the fact Israel was possibly facing charges of war crimes. It was a nauseatingly perfect example of Arundhati Roy’s comparison of the media to a buf-falo, “stumbling across the

plains, lurching from crisis to crisis, from war to war.” Was the whole thing just a drug-induced hallucination? There certainly was no trace of it on the TV. Was I to forget that only a few days ago we were on the brink of the next world war? And now my biggest concern, if I put my trust in the mainstream media, was the newest suspect in the Jean Benet Ramsey case, a name I thought I heard for the last time in 1997.

Since my 5 month long hospital stay I have been in recovery. My wounds have healed and, save a few recurrent aches and pains, my body seems to be alright. My head meanwhile is fried, with tunes of SUV commercials and fast food catch phrases resonating in my skull. I’ve been trying to focus, to not become a bee merely following the buffalo in order to take a little bite out of it while it pauses, to continue Roy’s analogy. It has been a challenge.

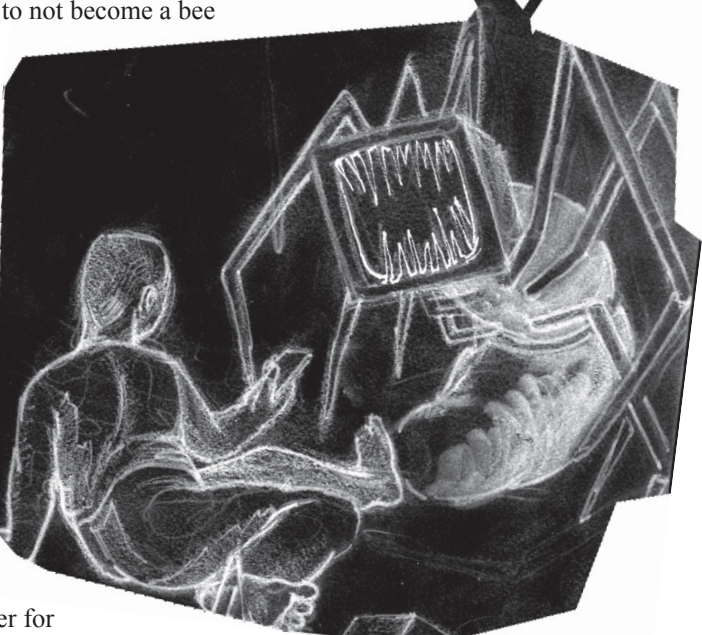
I find myself al-ways with a sense of urgency. Fuck! The country’s descending into a fascist police state! Should I be stockpiling arms and stashing canned food and bottled water for when the shit hits the fan? My atten-

tion is snatched away each time I hear of another massacre, arrest, strike or protest. Oaxaca, green scare, death row hunger strike in Texas. It keeps coming. SHAC 7, Mumia’s last chance, globaling, they’re going to dump gas in the Delaware River. Fuck!

It’s not just in the interest of my health that I’ve got to settle down. I realize there is no future in damage control activism. Just waiting for them to arrest or kill someone and pouncing on it and then forgetting about it in a few months when the Empire makes its next move.

And in this urgency, it is so easy to play the oppressor and forget about my own personal struggles to change myself. To listen more than I speak (an uphill battle), to be sensitive and understanding of other people and where they’re coming from. To work on the racism, homophobia, sexism and transphobia that are all inherent in my nature as a straight, white male, indoctrinated into straight, white, masculine culture.

As I get used to socializing again and relearn some of my atrophied conversational skills (you can’t interrupt TV and it doesn’t care if you are paying attention) I’ll try to remember that the sky is falling and that until I realize the struggle need me, I won’t be needed in the struggle.



art by eian! -- www.dhruva.vesana.com

Death waits for no one in Balata refugee camp

by Mohamed Farraj writing from Balata refugee camp, 21 October 2006

When I was released after serving two years in an Israeli prison, I returned to Balata refugee camp, near Nablus, to find that many of my friends were gone. Some were killed, many were in prison and others injured. With so many familiar faces no longer there, I began to realize just how much could change in such a short time.

Every day I saw the same young man standing in the same spot on the street. I will never forget the sorrowful expression he always wore. I could tell that like most, he was strong. But there was something different hidden in the depths of his hazel eyes.

Skipper, the son of an electrician, grew up with his three brothers on the outskirts of the camp. Though his given name was Osama, most people in the camp called him “Skipper” and his close friends called him “Disco Skipper.” “Skipper” was a nickname given to him in school, and “Disco” came from his love for dancing. Skipper would be the first one dancing at all the wedding parties in the camp.

Like many of his peers in tenth grade, Skipper left school to work for his father. However, he couldn’t stand working while the situation around him was worsening and his friends were being killed or arrested. His friend Ramzy says that Skipper would hang out with young men who were “wanted” by the Israeli army. Skipper was considered guilty by association and he too became “wanted.”

Skipper standing in his usual spot on Balata’s main market street one week before he was killed. (Do’a/picturebalata.net)

Once, when I was with an American friend who was visiting the camp, we stopped to talk to Skipper as he stood at that same spot in the street. As we joked around Skipper’s warm side emerged. We laughed right there on the street. Later on, we all went to a friend’s apartment. A friend of Skippers asked if we had any Michael Jackson music, and my American friend searched his laptop and played a song for everyone. Skipper’s friend tried to push Skipper to get up and at first he resisted. But then, after a few seconds, Skipper was up and dancing just like Michael Jackson. We all laughed.

During the night, Balata’s streets shut down. Everyone remains inside his or her home except for the fighters. The fighters sit with each other and wait, unsure if they will live to see the sun rise in the morning.

In the late hours of October 8, with dawn on its way, the Israeli army invaded the camp as they do every night. Most nights they occupied the land, the military vehicles positioned on the school street (the highest street in the camp). From there



they took aim to begin their attack on the fighters.

Skipper was with another fighter when they headed with their weapons to where the army was stationed. Suddenly there was shooting. These shots were not hollow -- they were felt by every person in the camp. We all knew someone was dying.

Skipper was shot. As he was walking, he suddenly ran into the soldiers in one of the camp’s narrow alleys. Both opened fire on each other in their respective struggle to survive by killing the other. Bitter enemies. Of course, the Israelis are militarily stronger thanks to their superior weapons. But Skipper -- like all Palestinians -- was

fortified with aspirations of freedom in his heart. And it was his heart that was penetrated by the shots heard throughout the camp. His friend was injured.

Skipper, despite his chest wound, began to run away from the soldiers. He fled until he was out of the soldiers’ sight. He then fell to the ground. The other fighters saw Skipper and momentarily thought that he was an injured Israeli soldier. But after a moment they realized it was their friend. With deep sorrow, they carried his body to a safe place.

Skipper could only say a few words, “Ambulance ... ambulance.” He lay in the middle of the camp until an ambulance was allowed to reach him. Skipper’s friends put him in the back of the vehicle and watched as it drove away. In the early dawn of that morning Skipper would close his eyes forever.

“He was my best friend,” says Ramzy, another fighter in the camp. “He was happy and he loved dancing, but sometimes there was pain in his voice. It was a shock for me the night he was shot. I was on the street but in a different place. They told me he was injured and I thought, thank god he’s not dead. Later, when I heard he had died, I took my gun and began to shoot at everything around me. I will never forget the way he looked at me that night when I last saw him. I had a few cigarettes and I shared half of them with him so he could smoke during the night.”

Before most people become martyrs they will write a will or final letter to their families and loved ones. Skipper wrote a will:

“To the children of Palestine. Don’t let anyone get you down, you must overcome your weakness and be strong. Finish your education. Our struggle must be fought through education, it is our path to freedom.

“Mother, do not cry for me because if I die I will be alive with the people. If I die don’t cry, just come to my grave and touch the ground and you will be touching my face. And tell the other mothers what it is like to sacrifice, and that Palestine needs our sacrifice. Palestine will use my blood to paint her story.”

At the age of 23, Skipper died without a coin in his pocket, only a few pictures of his friends who had been killed by the Israeli army. He had never asked for hand-outs from anyone, but the night before he was killed he asked his neighbor for a sandwich. The following night the camp lost a good man.

His pale face and deep voice are deeply missed. Skipper left not only a bloodstain on the ground and poster on the wall for people to remember him -- like the scores of others killed in Balata, Skipper left a deep void.

I know that Skipper didn’t want to die. He had lost many of his friends to the occupation, at least twelve young men who were in his class growing up. Skipper didn’t choose to be a fighter. It chose him.

Skipper was a victim of the occupation like every young Palestinian refugee in Balata. The occupation steals each youth’s childhood. There are few opportunities in Balata. And the many military checkpoints surrounding Nablus that make it almost impossible to leave the camp remind young people who is in control of their future. It is an open-air prison. Everyone I know who has died, including Skipper, used to talk about how they wanted something better for themselves and for we Palestinians generally. No one wants this life we’re given -- it’s not life at all.

Skipper now lies in the graveyard with his friends and the other victims of the occupation. Like every martyr, Skipper has become a memory in the peoples’ minds, memorialized by the posters carrying his name and face that have been hung where he stood every day.

Skipper was from a generation of young people whom I hadn’t yet really gotten to know before going to prison. When I was released, however, they had all grown up. They had a fresh sense of resistance and concern for the fate of the people of Balata. This, it dawned on me, was the cycle of conflict. One goes and another one rises to his place. We can never know exactly who will go and who will come, but we can be sure that those who will rise up next will come from the youth.

Mohamed Farraj is a resident of Balata refugee camp. During the current Intifada he was seriously wounded by the Israeli army and served almost two years in an Israeli prison. Currently, he is a journalism student at Al-Najah University in Nablus.



defenestrator

prison pages

compiled by Philly Anarchist Black Cross



Charges Against Ojore Lutalo Reduced

In a recent letter sent to Philly ABC, the New Afrikan anarchist POW Ojore Lutalo informed his supporters that the infraction charge he received last year, which landed him in the Management Control Unit, has been reduced to a lower charge. The charge he received on June 10th, 2005 was a 803-306--“attempt at conduct which disrupts.” The charges were reduced to a 210 charge, which basically translates to having possession of something not authorized for possession.

Ojore has also been told that his “good time” that was stripped after June 10th has been reinstated (a total of 1 year reduction off his sentence.) Ojore’s work credits have also been returned, which will bring his max out-date to March 2009. There is also a chance that he could reduce his max outdate down to December 2008 with more work credits.

Write to Ojore today!

Ojore Lutalo
59860
P.O. Box 861
SBI# 0000901548
Trenton, NJ 08625

US Prison Population Reaches 2.3 Million

For years, the United States has held the dubious distinction of incarcerating more people and at a higher rate than any other peacetime nation in the world. According to statistics released December 9th, 2006 by the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics, the number of US residents behind bars has now reached more than 2.3 million. The rate of incarceration has risen to 491 sentenced inmates per 100,000 US residents, up from 411 a decade ago. Four states – Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi and Oklahoma – have incarceration rates of more than 650 per 100,000, with Louisiana soaring above all other states with the astonishing rate of 797.



Support political prisoners and prisoners of war detained in the US!
Make a donation to the ABCF Warchest today:

- 1) Through PayPal, send a donation to TimABCF@aol.com
- 2) By check, made out to Tim Fasnacht and sent to Philly ABC / P.O. Box 42129 / Phila, PA 19101

ProLibertad Adopt-A-Prisoner 2007 Campaign

The ProLibertad Freedom Campaign is calling on all allies, supporters and friends to remember our brothers and sisters behind the walls. They are amazing and inspirational compañeros / compañeras that were incarcerated by the US government for their brave actions and commitment to the liberation of Puerto Rico.

As the year 2007 begins, we are urging all of you to join ProLibertad’s newest campaign:

ADOPT-A-PRISONER 2007

Step 1: Go our website: <http://www.prolibertadweb.com/page4.html> and read about one of our prisoners.

Step 2: Choose one or all of them and make the commitment to write to him/her/them once or twice a month.

Step 3: If you can, send them a commissary donation (small financial donation \$5-whatever; every little bit counts). These donations allow them to pay for phone calls to family/LEGAL COUNSEL/friends and also for over-priced materials behind the walls. To learn more about how to donate to them go to: <http://www.prolibertadweb.com/page5.html>

Step 4: Email us Prolibertad@hotmail.com and let us know who you’ve adopted. We want to keep track of this campaign and see how many of you are able to commit to supporting our prisoners.

Step 5: Motivate all of your friends to ADOPT-A-PRISONER. Be creative! Invite Prolibertad to come speak at a letter-writing party or other event.

Hanif Shabazz Bey Denied Commutation

In a January 9th letter to Philly ABC, Hanif Shabazz Bey informed supporters that the Governor of the Virgin Islands had denied his recent application for commutation. Of the 108 applicants who had submitted requests for commutation, only 7 were released- excluding even the Governor’s own son.

Who are the Virgin Islands 5?

In September 1972, during a turbulent period of rebellion against US rule in the Islands, eight American tourists were murdered at a Rockefeller-owned golf course on the island of St.Croix. Immediately following this incident, colonial authorities picked up over one hundred Black people for interrogations, and U.S. colonial troops carried out a series of repressive acts of violence against the Black community. The F.B.I. and the United States Army troops led a 300-man invasion force into the islands and used strong-armed tactics to conduct house-to-house searches of the low-income areas.

The island was put under martial law, and eventually Hanif and 4 others were apprehended and charged with the attack. They were beaten, hung by their feet and necks from trees, shocked, had plastic bags tied over their heads, and water forced up their noses by “defenders of the law.” The court proceedings were an insult to justice; for example, one of the jurors was married to the detective who arrested the 5 and nine other jurors were threatened with FBI investigations against them and their families.

Hanif has spent the last 34 years in prison for his involvement in this movement to win independence from US occupation of the Islands. 2 of his 4 co-defendants, Warren (Aziz) Ballantine, Meral (Malik) Smith, are confined in federal prisons. Another, Ismail Ali, was liberated to Cuba via an airplane hijacking in 1984. The fourth, Raphael (Kwesi) Joseph, was granted a pardon by the V.I. governor in 1992. Six years later Kwesi was mysteriously found dead of poison-laced drug overdose, after it was said that he was about to reveal evidence that would have exonerated at least one or more defendant.

Write to Hanif at the following address:

Hanif Shabazz Bey
(Beaumont Gereau) #295933,
Wallens Ridge State Prison,
P.O. Box 759,
Big Stone Gap, VA 24219

The Next Battle of the Social War: Nine Black Panthers and State Repression

By Dave Strano of Kansas Mutual Aid

January 23, 2007 should be a day that lives in infamy within the movements for liberation in North America. On that date, the nearly four decades long war on the Black Panthers was shown to still exist. Nine individuals, most identified as being members of the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army, were charged by officials in California with murder or murder related crimes. The incident in question involved the killing of a police officer inside the police station in which he worked in 1971. Over 35 years later, the struggle that the killing of the officer symbolizes is alive and strong.

By 1971, the resistance movements of the late 1960’s had started to go underground. Armed clandestine militants were fighting against the mechanisms of state and capitalist power in a large-scale, low intensity war. One of those groups was the Black Liberation Army.

The Black Liberation Army was formed by former members of the Black Panther Party that had left the Party for a variety of reasons. The members of the BLA saw the Party being torn apart from infiltration, state sponsored chemical warfare (the purposeful influx of drugs by the government to black communities), infighting caused by Colntelpro and power struggles amongst the leadership of the Panthers.

The BLA came to represent some of the most committed of the Black Panther Party, with members including Sundiata Acoli, As-sata Shakur, Dr. Mutulu Shakur, and Ashanti Alston. The BLA existed to continue the fight the Party had started.

A feeling pervaded amongst the membership of the BLA that they had to go underground even to survive. With pressure coming from sectarians active within the Black Panthers on one side, and the government on the other, the BLA went underground in 1970.

On August 29, 1971, according to police reports, several men crowded into the Ingleside Police Station in California and fired a shotgun through a hole in the counter glass. A civilian file clerk was wounded, while Sgt. John V. Young was killed.

Later in 1973, among thirteen black militants arrested for the crime, Black Panthers John Bowman, Ruben Scott, and Harold Taylor would all be targeted as being the men that had killed Sgt. Young. In New Orleans, the three would be arrested. San Francisco police officers that were working with the FBI to solve the killing, Frank McCoy and Ed Erdelatz, were flown to New Orleans to aid in the questioning of Bowman, Scott, and Taylor.

The three Panthers refused to cooperate with the investigation. They then faced days of torture at the hands of New Orleans police officers, including being stripped naked, beaten, blindfolded, covered in blankets soaked with

boiling water, and having electric probes placed on their genitals, among other methods. When the matter finally went to court in 1975, a federal judge threw out the charges citing that all the evidence against them had been extracted through the use of torture.

In 2003, the case was reopened with the use of a grand jury. The two SFPD police officers that had been responsible for the torture of the three Black Panthers were put back in charge of the investigation. They were deputized by the federal government and started to work side by side with the FBI on the investigation.

When the original grand jury had ended with no indictments, the State of California opened another one in 2005, bringing five former Black Panthers to be questioned. Hank Jones, Ray Boudreaux, John Bowman, Harold Taylor, and Richard Brown all resisted the grand jury and were eventually jailed and released.

Now, in late January of 2007, all of those that appeared before the jury, save John Bowman who died of liver cancer on December 23, 2006, are among the nine militants now being charged with the killing of Sgt. Young. The others being charged in the case are Herman Bell and Jalil Muntaqim (both currently imprisoned political prisoners on charges of killing a different police officer in New York), Francisco Torres, Richard O’Neal, and Ronald Bridgeforth. Bridgeforth is currently the only suspect not in custody and his whereabouts are unknown to the government.

We must view these new arrests in the historical context in which they were conducted.

In the 1960’s and 1970’s the U.S. government waged an open war on the resistance movements that had grown against White Supremacy, the war in Vietnam, Patriarchy, and the entire capitalist system. Using a wide variety of tactics- from assassinations to infiltration- the government was able to destroy and subdue most of the organizations and factions involved within these movements.

Fast forward three decades later to 2007, where a rising tide of anti-capitalist momentum in the form of organizing and movement building is flooding the world. From Oaxaca to Olympia, organized social movements are again gaining strength and taking the state and global capitalism head on. As public opinion shifts strongly against the “War on Terrorism”, and new forms of social resistance are starting to rise, we’ve seen an increased attack on members of resistance movements in the U.S.

The U.S. government would not have reopened this case if it did not intend on sending a message to all those who resist. As we’ve seen with Operation Backfire, the arrests in Auburn, California, FBI harassment of members of the Great Plains Anarchist Network in 2004, and in many operations in the last ten years, the government is trying to send a clear message: “Don’t dare stand up.”

As cases like that of Eric McDavid and Brendan Walsh illustrate, we have not handled ourselves well as a movement under this type of attack. The former has been languishing in a prison cell for over a year awaiting trial, and the latter is a young anti-war militant who has been imprisoned and nearly forgotten for the last three years.

Add to these incidents the sudden news that all of the remaining captured defendants of Operation Backfire have pleaded guilty, and we start to see that we need to come up with better ideas of how to support members of our movements when they are attacked by the state.

For years, prison struggle and prisoner issues have been on a back burner within the larger anarchist milieu. Small groups of anarchists have done what little they knew how to support political prisoners and those reeling from repression. We cannot afford to ignore these issues as a larger movement any longer. We are under attack. If we don’t defend ourselves now, with creative new methods, then we will falter and we’ll just watch as nine more comrades are imprisoned.

Our movement has to go beyond signing petitions, raising legal funds, and calling prison administrators and government officials. We have to create a movement based on real revolutionary solidarity. When the government attacks, we need to be offering support to families of those they have attacked. We need to be organizing with community leaders in those communities that are targeted to link our mutual struggles. We need to be ready to “turn up the heat” and intensify what may already be intense local efforts.

This has been an issue I’ve been grappling with for years, trying to figure out what more I can do to help those that are imprisoned or are facing prison. One thing has been blindingly clear, however: our current models don’t work. Pressure on economic and political interests that comes from a community social movement will always work better than trying to fight our battles through petitions and courtrooms. So what the hell does that mean exactly?

The answers seem so much easier when you are reading a book about social movements in the 1970’s that hijacked helicopters or broke into prisons to free their captured comrades. Now in 2007, those options seem so far removed from the reality of our movement that is still healing after going into near extinction following September 11th.

One thing is certain in this era of unanswered questions: we must place the struggle to free these Panthers, Eric McDavid, Brendan Walsh, and all other political prisoners at the forefront of our work. We must learn how to connect the new and old generations of political prisoners with the work we’re doing in the streets. We need to make sure that every damn person

in our cities knows who these people are. We need to ensure that when we are organizing against the war, we are also organizing to free those that resisted war.

We have to be able to view our movements in the context of a history of social movements in the U.S. that dates back to at least 1492. We need to ensure that we do not leave our people to sit in a jail cell without massive actions demanding their release. We need to ensure that we don’t allow them to imprison these Panthers.

We need to ensure that we don’t act like we always have, and forget. We as a movement have forgotten those that fill the prison cells and those that face them. Let’s remember. And never forget. Let’s never leave those facing imprisonment hanging ever again. When they face those cells, let them face them with a strong movement beside them.

To get updates on this case and donate to the legal defense fund, visit the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (www.cdhrsupport.org) and the Freedom Archives (www.freedomarchives.org).

Current addresses for the arrested Panthers:

Herman Bell
#79C-0262
Sullivan Correctional Facility
Box 116
Riverside Drive
Fallsburg, NY 12733-0116

Ray Boudreaux
#2301300
850 Bryant Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

Richard Brown
#2300819
850 Bryant Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

Henry W. Jones
#2301301
850 Bryant Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

Jalil Muntaqim (Anthony Bottom)
#77A4283
Auburn Correctional Facility
135 State Street
P.O. Box 618
Auburn, NY 13024

Richard O’Neal
#2300818
850 Bryant Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

Harold Taylor
#07-00944
5600 Nehi Road
Panama City, FL 32404

Francisco Torres
#349071576
1515 Hazen Street
East Elmhurst, NY 11370

Ronald Stanley Bridgeforth has not been found by the police.

The Sound of Silence

The media establishment and the death of journalism

by eian weissman

2006 was the deadliest year on record for Journalists worldwide. The numbers seem to be in dispute, with some sources reporting as few as 50 confirmed deaths, some as high as 76 or more. It is said that, in war, the first casualty is truth. Unfortunately, those that report it too often get caught in the crossfire.

In an open letter addressed to Reporters Without Borders (RSF)—one of the largest “press freedom” advocacy organizations—Al Giordano, the publisher of the Narco News Bulletin writes:

“These are difficult times for the profession of journalism and for journalists, because, increasingly, the threats to our safety and free speech are coming from within the industry itself: from the corporate owners of TV, radio, print and commercial Internet news organizations.”

In his letter, Giordano criticizes RSF for its misrepresentation of the election of Hugo Chavez, his subsequent overthrow in a short lived military coup and reinstatement and Chavez’s supposed curtailments of press freedom while in office.

Despite its apparent biases, the RSF does provide some good analysis in regard to suppressions of press freedom worldwide, although its supposed objectivity is tarnished by its receiving government funding for its work. A case in point is the rating of the USA at 56th place out of 168 countries, as a result of recent prosecutions of journalists for refusing to divulge their sources. It seems ironic that while the US generates so much rhetoric in support of press freedom, that it is the primary

market of the product of the world drug-trade, and yet not the recipient of a commensurate share of world scrutiny.

Impunity reigns

Ironically enough, the causes of death in many of these cases are murky and very few of the killers have been apprehended.

In Latin America, press freedom has been curtailed, in large part by corruption following the flow of narcotics through the region. Particularly in Mexico in the last few years, a number of Journalists have been intimidated and killed by “narcotrafficanes” and even by corrupt authorities in some instances, who have certainly helped to preserve the impunity of their killers if nothing else.

According to Reporters without Borders: “Sixteen journalists have been killed [in Mexico] or have vanished while doing their job since 2000. Three others were killed in 2005 but not apparently because of their work...”

In the state of Oaxaca, Mexico, “Relations between the media and the authorities are very tense in Oaxaca, where allies of Governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz frequently obstructed the operations of the local daily Noticias de Oaxaca from June 2005 onwards.” This has culminated with the recent, ongoing occupation of the Oaxaca city center by a striking teachers union along with a number of activists from various parts of Mexico in response to repression by the Ortiz regime. Recently, an independent US journalist working for Indymedia(.org) was shot to death by Mexican Police and paramilitaries in their hire while filming a Oaxaca barracade.

Drug traffic, however, has been responsible for suppression of the press, reports RSF,

“Organised crime, often linked with corrupt local officials, is the main reason for worsening press freedom in Mexico, especially along the border with the United States, where smugglers reign. Many journalists, seeing colleagues killed, choose self-censorship to avoid being the target of reprisals. Since the June 2004 killing of Francisco Javier Ortiz Franco, of the weekly paper Zeta in Tijuana, on the northwestern border with the US, federal officials have formally been in charge of investigating murders of journalists. However, a special prosecutor’s office to handle crimes against the media promised by the federal government has never been set up, so the murder inquiries have made no progress and impunity has increased.”

Headlines, Frontlines and Bottom Lines

In a pamphlet entitled “headlines, frontlines and bottom lines”, the Philadelphia based media literacy group Media Tank details a laundry list of conflicts of interest present in todays increasingly monolithic media establishment.

These conflicts range from the de facto conflict of entertainment companies peddling news through various media holdings to the conflicts of cross ownership, such as case of General Electric owning various media outlets while producing weaponry for the US military.

Perhaps the Lockheed Martin slogan sums up this conflict of interest of media companies tied to commercial and military industries best of all: “We never forget who we’re working for.”

deeply rooted patterns of media manipulation by Corporate America through the Public Relations industry. Its author details the pioneering of PR by tactics such as the Press Release (read: manufactured news) and news conferences, implemented—in one early instance—in the defense of John Rockefeller after the Ludlow Massacre in an attempt to spin the slaughter of striking workers by the National Guard.

One more recent case in point is the case of Gary Webb, the reporter who broke the infamous “Dark Alliance” series in 1996 which detailed how funds from crack sales across the US were being funneled, with the knowledge and even complicity of the CIA, to the right wing Contra anti-Sandinista terrorists in Nicaragua. In their recent book, *Kill the Messenger: How the CIA’s Crack-Cocaine Controversy Destroyed Journalist Gary Webb* Nick Schou and Charles Bowden detail the concerted attack by the US media on Webb. Nearly every major paper in the US published lengthy rebuttals of Webb’s article, slandering him and eventually blackballing him from further employment in the media establishment.

In an article published in Le Monde Diplomatique, by Serge Halimi entitled, *His Masters Voice* detailing the state of press freedom in France, he quotes the historian Patrick Eveno:

“...the French media have regained their operating freedom by cutting the ties that bound them to the state. The press is in better shape not only because advertising has been on the upswing, but also because the print media have plans for both the editorial and commercial domains. ... The French media have entered the era of modern democratic capitalism. ...The only way for newspapers to preserve their independence is to keep both readers and shareholders satisfied”

And, in this age of “modern democratic capitalism” where press freedom is bound to the whims of the market, the mercenaries of global capitalism call the shots. With their private security, private ministerial meetings the heads of global corporations that increasingly own the world’s media outlets are making the Americas and the world beyond its shores a great big gated community. We in the general public are not invited.

In an increasingly privatized world, as our government is outsourced to the corporations it ought to oversee, the press will censor itself.

August Spies, one of the Haymarket Martyrs hung in Chicago for allegedly conspiring to incite the death of police officers during the Haymarket riot in May of 1886, stated on ascending the gallows, “There will be a time when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today.” Alas, his words seem more relevant than ever today.

How to Support Survivors of Sexual Assault

by Philly's Pissed

The most important thing to remember is to be flexible. People react to assault really differently, pay attention to their responses and be ready to change what you are doing.

1- Deal with immediate needs. Do they want/ need medical attention? A change of clothes? A shower? A safe place to be? ECP?

2- Listen. No, for real. Listen.



3- It’s not about you. Don’t put your spin on what happened (“You must be furious” or “If only you hadn’t been drinking”). Don’t put your spin on what should happen (“We should go fuck them up” or “Everyone needs to know”). Let them tell you how they feel, what the assault means to them and what support they need. Listen.

4- Respect how much or how little they want to tell you about what happened. You don’t need to know anything and they don’t have to let it all out. On the other hand, retelling the story over and over might be what they need.

5- Help them feel in control. Assault takes away power and control and restoring these can be helpful. This might be letting them control where you are, what you’re doing or who knows about what happened.

6- Give them options. Some folks get overwhelmed by having to tell people what they need. “Do you want to go home, go to the park or go to your sister’s place?” Sometimes people might want you to decide.

7- Let them determine what physical contact is okay. Remember: Someone just took that choice away from them.

8- Validate what happened. Minimizing is

common: “I shouldn’t be so upset, worse assaults have happened.”

9- Don’t gossip. Seriously. Let them decide who needs to know and when.

Activities that might help:

- 1- Tea/coffee/beer/juice
- 2- Food
- 3- Walks
- 4- Bike rides
- 5- Crying
- 6- Yelling
- 7- Offering a place to sleep

- 8- Not talking
- 9- Talking
- 10- TV
- 11- Massage
- 12- Helping find a therapist
- 13- Smashing bottles
- 14- Leaving them alone
- 15- Music
- 16- Family

Some normal reactions:

- 1- Nightmares
- 2- Reliving the assault in their mind
- 3- Trouble remembering
- 4- Being upset by things that remind them of assault
- 5- Numbing of responses or being extra sensitive to everything

Hospitals: Hospitals can do rape kits and give ECP. They can also be incredibly awful to survivors and they might call the cops. Think carefully before going.

For more information, details, and materials: www.phillyspissed.net

This is a very brief starting point, taken from the 2007 Philly’s Tool Kit Organizer. To get your hands on a Tool Kit, email toolkit@riseup.net or swing by Mariposa Co-op or Wooden shoe Books.

Philadelphia Collective Hopes to Open Autonomous Space in Kensington

by the Heartsville Community Space Collective

Envision a community space where people are welcome to just come and hang out, maybe watch a movie or play a game of pool; a space where people can borrow books, check their email or do research online without restrictive time limits; all while getting a chance to meet and talk with their neighbors and hopefully, through all of this, be a force for change in their neighborhood. Several community activists who live in the Kensington and Frankford neighborhoods have been informally discussing opening such a space for several years, and with the formation of the Heartsville Community Space Collective (HCSC) are finally taking the first steps to make their dream a reality.

“Our goal is to maintain a community center which will be a public and democratic space utilized by the neighborhood and movements for justice,” HCSC member Brian Leach explained. He went on to say that the collective is specifically organized along anarchist principles and that through their work HCSC hopes to show that revolutionary ideas are key for social change.

The collective has chosen to establish its physical space in the Kensington neighborhood due to the fact that this community is often underserved by city services and other nonprofits, and also because several HCSC members currently reside in that community.

“The Heartsville Community Center’s founding members are actual residents of this neighborhood and we have every intention of making the community space a valuable asset for our community,” collective member Jared Schultz said. “We feel that as residents of the neighborhood we are better equipped to deal with some of the issues facing this community than other groups or services that are not based here.”

Cyndi Pitt, another HCSC member, added that the collective is planning on getting community input into what services and programs are needed. “We don’t want to just establish this space based on our own vision and on what we want to do. We want our neighbors to be involved in the process from the ground up, telling us what they want offered at the community center and helping to get the space up and running. Having this input from our neighbors is a very important part of the process for us,” Pitt said. To

that end, Pitt explained, HCSC plans on handing out surveys and doing an informal canvass of the area to get an idea of what people would like to see in a community center.

Some of the services the collective envisions are a truly free lending library, free computer access, language tutoring, political film screenings, and radical speaking events. They also plan on offering space to other community groups to use as they see fit.

HCSC realizes that there is a limit to the services they can offer such as emergency housing, food distribution, and women’s services and are already starting to build working relationships with preexisting organizations that can offer these services. According to collective member Jason Robbins, part of the vision for the Heartsville Community Space will be to operate as a clearinghouse for information and referrals to these types of services.

Expanding on this, Robbins said “I wish there was a way we could provide everything, but that is just not realistically possible. However, I am confident that we can build strong ties with other organizations so that we can work hand in hand to provide people with what they need most.”

After a discussion concerning the physical location for their work, HCSC decided to concentrate on the area in and around Kensington and Allegheny Avenues in the heart of Kensington, an area that is well known as a hub for shopping and public transportation in the neighborhood.

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Stop the killing

End the Impunity

76 JOURNALISTS KILLED IN 2006

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IT IS SAID THAT, IN WAR, THE FIRST CASUALTY IS TRUTH. UNFORTUNATELY, THOSE THAT SEEK TO TELL IT OFTEN GET CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE.

for more information:

www.CPJ.org

www.indymedia.org


www.narconews.com

www.RSF.org

www.friendsofbrad.org

1 2

pictured at right, from top: anna politkovskaya (RUS) Francisco Ortiz (MEX) Miguel Tamarit Hernandez (MEX) Dolores Escamilla (MEX) Bradley Roland WHI (US, killed in Mexico last month)



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Immigration Raids

December’s Raids on meatpacking plants weren’t about curbing identity theft, they were about union-busting.


By David Bacon 12.14.06

In 1947, Woody Guthrie wrote a song about the crash of a plane carrying Mexican immigrant farm workers back to the border. In haunting lyrics he describes how it caught fire as it flew low over Los Gatos Canyon, near Coalinga at the edge of California’s San Joaquin Valley. Observers below saw people and belongings flung out of the aircraft before it hit the ground, falling like leaves, he wrote.

No record was kept of the workers’ identities. They were simply listed as “deportee,” and that became the name of the song. Far from being recognized as workers or even human beings, Guthrie lamented, the dead were treated as criminals. “They chase us like outlaws, like rustlers, like thieves.” Some things haven’t changed much. When agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrested over a thousand workers in six Swift and Company meatpacking plants on Tuesday, they too were called criminals. In Greeley, Colorado, agents dressed in SWAT uniforms even carried a hundred handcuffs with them into the plant.

The workers, they said, were identity thieves. Barbara Gonzalez, an ICE spokesperson, told reporters outside the slaughterhouse there that “we have been investigating a large identity theft scheme that has victimized many U.S. citizens and lawful residents.” ICE head Julie Myers told other reporters in Washington, D.C. that “those who steal identities of U.S. citizens will not escape enforcement.”

Not everyone fell into the ICE chorus. In Grand Island, Nebraska, site of another Swift plant, police chief Steve Lamken refused to help agents drag workers from the slaughterhouse. “When this is all over, we’re still here,” he told the local paper, “and if I have a significant part of my population that’s fearful and won’t call us, then that’s not good for our community.” In Greeley, hundreds of people, accompanied by the local priest, lined the street as their family members were brought out, shouting that they’d been guilty of nothing more than hard work.

ICE rhetoric would have you believe these deportees had been planning to apply for credit  and charge expensive stereotypes or trips to

the spa. The reality is that these meatpacking laborers had done what millions of people in this country do every year. They gave a Social Security number to their employer that either didn’t belong to them, or that didn’t exist. And they did it for a simple reason: to get a job in one of the dirtiest, hardest, most dangerous workplaces in America. Mostly, these borrowed numbers probably belong to other immigrants who’ve managed to get green cards. But regardless of who they are, the real owners of the Social Security numbers will benefit, not suffer.



Swift paid thousands of extra dollars into their Social Security accounts. The undocumented immigrants using the numbers will never be able to collect a dime in retirement pay for all their years of work on the killing floor. If anyone was cheated here, they were. But when ICE agents are calling the victims criminals in order to make their immigration raid sound like an action on behalf of upright citizens.

ICE has not, of course, accused the immigrant workers of the real crime for which they were arrested. That’s the crime of working. Since passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, hiring an undocumented worker has been a violation of federal law. Don’t expect Swift executives to go to jail, however, or even to pay a fine. The real targets of this law are workers themselves, who become violators the minute they take a job.

Arresting people for holding a job, however, sounds a little inconsistent with the traditional values of hard work supported so strongly by the Bush administration. It makes better PR to accuse workers of a crime that sends shivers down the spines of middle-class newspaper readers, already maxing out their credit cards in the holiday rush.

The real motivation for these immigration raids is more cynical. The Swift action follows months of ICE pressuring employers to fire workers whose Social Security numbers don’t match the agency’s database. These no-match

When workers at Emeryville, California’s Woodfin Suites tried to enforce the city’s new living wage law, Measure C, they too were suddenly hit with a no-match check.

It’s no accident that workers belong to unions in five of the six Swift meatpacking plants where this week’s raids took place. ICE’s pressure campaign recalls the history of immigration enforcement during previous periods when anti-immigration bills were debated in the 2006 U.S. Congress.

Before 1986, the then-Immigration and Naturalization Service conducted months of high-profile workplace raids, called Operation Jobs. INS used the raids to produce public support for the employer sanctions provision later written into the 1986 immigration law.

In 1998, the INS mounted a huge enforcement action in Nebraska, also targeting meatpacking workers, called Operation Vanguard. Mark Reed, then INS District Director in Dallas, was open about its purpose -- to get industry and Congress to support new bracero-type contract labor programs. “That’s where we’re going,” he said in an interview at the time. “We depend on foreign labor. If we don’t have illegal immigration anymore, we’ll have the political support for guest workers.”

Today, ICE and the Bush administration also have an immigration program

actions have been concentrated in workplaces where immigrants are organizing unions or standing up for their rights.

At the Cintas laundry chain, over 400 workers were terminated in November alone, as a result of no-match letters. Cintas is the target of the national organizing drive by UNITE HERE, the hotel and garment workers union.

In November also, hundreds walked out of the huge Smithfield pork processing plant in Tarheel, North Carolina, after the company fired 60 workers for Social Security discrepancies. That non-union plant is not just the national organizing target for the United Food and Commercial Workers Union. Smithfield has also been found guilty repeatedly of firing its employees for union activity, and threatening to use their immigration status against them.

Raids

continued from last page

is that we’re serious about work site enforcement,” threatened ICE chief Myers. After six years in office, ICE’s choice of this moment to begin their campaign is more than suspect. It is designed to force the new Democratic congressional majority to make a choice. The administration is confident that Democrats will endorse workplace raids in order to appear “tough on illegal immigration” in preparation for the 2008 presidential elections. In doing so, they will have to attack two of the major groups who produced the votes that changed Congress in November -- labor and Latinos.

Since 1999, however, the AFL-CIO has called for the repeal of employer sanctions, along with the legalization of the 12 million people living in the United States without documents. One reason is that sanctions are used to punish workers for speaking out for better wages and conditions. Unions serious about organizing immigrants (and that’s a lot of unions nowadays) have seen sanctions used repeatedly to smash their campaigns. But unions today also include many immigrant members. They want the organizations to which they pay their dues to stand up and fight when government agents bring handcuffs into the plant.

The United Food and Commercial Workers, which represents workers at Swift, did go into court on the day of the raid, asking for an injunction to stop the deportations and to guarantee workers their rights to habeas corpus and legal representation. But labor will need to do more than that. Unions and immigrants both need a bill that would mandate what they’ve advocated since 1999 -- the repeal of employer sanctions. Workers without visas would still be subject to deportation, but enforcement wouldn’t take place in the workplace, where sanctions deny basic labor rights to millions.

The administration and Republicans in Congress wouldn’t like that, nor would conservative Democrats. Reps. Rahm Emmanuel and Silvestre Reyes, even want sanctions beefed up. But Democrats and labor must make a choice. They can defend the workers, unions and immigrant families who gave them victory in November (voting Democratic 7 out of 10.) Or Democrats can, as they have so often done, turn their back in another triangulation sacrificing their base.

They can join the government’s chorus calling these workers criminals. Or they can recognize them as the human beings they are. David Bacon is a California photojournalist. His latest book, Communities Without Borders (Cornell University Press, 2006) documents immigrant communities, including those employed in the Swift plant in Omaha.

from www.immigrantsolidarity.org



Nerve Gas

continued from page 4

al. The SCWO method “does not produce any toxic residue requiring discharge to a waterway,” according to the Delaware Riverkeeper site.

CH: What can citizens do to help make sure this situation is safely resolved?

TC: People can voice their concerns and opposition to the proposal to bring VX nerve agent waste to the Delaware River. By going to www.DelawareRiverkeeper.org, you can sign up to be an e-activist. You can send a letter online to our elected representatives. This is extremely effective. The Army thought they would already be transporting the VX waste by the end of 2004 (it was first proposed in the beginning of 2004). But people found out about the plan to push this through and came out to hearings and wrote letters by the thousands. Our elected representatives heard them. Congressmen and Senators from New Jersey demanded further study. The Governors of New Jersey and Delaware contacted the Army with their opposition. Letters to the editor are very effective.

Studies are ongoing and the fight is not over. Continued public opposition and public support for officials when they do the right thing is key to stopping the Dupont plan and securing the project to destroy these horrible weapons on site in Indiana.

People can get their town to pass a resolution against the plan; this is happening many places. A sample resolution can be downloaded from DRN’s website. If you want to do more, contact DRN. There will be public hearings and events in the future after the GAO audit is complete and the Army makes a final determination.

This article originally appeared in the Green City Journal

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Autonomous Center


continued from page 13

“This area offers a highly visible location, and is easily accessible to both community members and other city residents who travel to this area everyday,” Leach said.

Concentrating on the unique name of the community center, Schultz explained that the name Heartsville dates back to before the Consolidation Act of 1854 when the Kensington District became part of the City of Philadelphia. “It was the name of the specific neighborhood in the area of Kensington Avenue and Heart [now spelled Hart] Lane extending east to Frankford Avenue,” he said.

Continuing to explain their thoughts behind

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the name, Pitt commented “...Kensington has a very long and diverse history. We want to give people a glimpse of this history and an opportunity to be proud of where they live. We want to use this name in the hopes that with everyone working together, this neighborhood can return to its former prosperity.”

On the business end of things, HCSC is waiting on confirmation of fiscal sponsorship through La Lutta New Media Collective (www.lalutta.org) and is in the process of raising the much needed funds to get this project off the ground.

Robbins explained that the first few steps the

collective will be taking are to incorporate and apply for nonprofit status. “While researching the laws and processes involved in incorporating and operating as a non-profit, we are in need of funds to begin our search for a physical space which we hope will be up and running by the beginning of the summer,” he said.

For anyone interested, HCSC is currently seeking financial donations as well as in-kind donations and other support. For more information, including how to make tax-deductible donations, the Heartsville Community Space Collective can be reached at heartsvillespace@gmail.com.

Rebel calendar

Wednesday, February 21
Issues Through Film with Geoclan
featuring Spike Lee's *Bamboozled*
6:30pm at LAVA
info: geoclan.com

February 23-March 10
An Exhibition of the Contexts Collection of Art by Prisoners curated and present by Books Through Bars on display at Kaffa Crossing

Friday, February 23
Johny Cash Birthday Bash!
Films celebrating the life of Johny Cash Donation at the door benefits Defenestrator's prisoner mailing, Bring books for Books Through Bars! Firehouse Bicycles 50th & Baltimore 2nd Floor

Afropick
EXPERIMENTAL HardROCK fusion- Noize , Pinoy Punks – Kadena and God's Loudest Band - The Baptist Preachers; a fundraiser for the Human Rights Coalition Hosted by former Black Panther political prisoner Ashanti Alston
info: www.myspace.com/afropickmusic

Saturday, February 24
Human Rights Concert
Acoustic Philly Festival : Fifteen musical acts performing to raise awareness about immigrant and refugee rights. Line up TBA.
7 p.m. to 2 a.m. at the Rotunda

Wooden Shoe Saturday Night Movies: Free to Learn
7:30pm at Wooden Shoe Books

Sunday, February 25
A discussion of Grassroots Journalism by Eesha Williams
3-4pm at LAVA

Screening of "The Ground Truth"
1:30pm-3:30pm at the Friends Center, 1501 Cherry St (Corner of 15th & Cherry St)

February 28th
Help the CIW Fight McExploitation!
The SFA (Student Farmworker Alliance) will be at LAVA to give an educational community presentation about the CIW farmworkers' struggle and build support for big actions this April in Chicago at the McDonald's headquarters. Come learn about the CIW and join the ?ght!
7pm at LAVA

March 1st
RACE to EXECUTION Film & Panel
with speakers: Harold Wilson - PA Death Row Exoneree, Acel Moore - Phila Inq , Michael Coard - Court Certified Death Penalty Defense Attorney
info:267.259-2049

Friday, March 2
Mothership Connection
10pm at LAVA

Saturday, March 3
rizumu dance party
ben parris, someone else, tleilaxu, diss0nance, accidentally with delicious vegan catering
10pm till late dawn at LAVA

Sunday, March 4
Meeting to plan creative action against 4 year anniversary of Iraq invasion
1PM A-Space 4722 Baltimore Ave contact
info: pawf@critpath.org

Thursday March 8
Radical folk singer Lars Din rockin the LAVA space
7pm at LAVA

March 9-11
National Conference for Organized Resistance in Washington DC info: www.organizedresistance.org/

Friday, March 9th
Contexts Prison Art Collection
Closing Reception hosted by Poems Not Prisons with featured readings from local poets and from the

work of prison poets.
7-9 pm at Kaffa Crossing Cafe, 4423 Chestnut St
Saturday, March 10th
"Getting Out to Stay Out"
A Musical interposed with testimony. Various groups will sing, dance and provide music, in between which previously incarcerated men and women will tell their stories.
7 pm at 4321 Tower St. in Manayunk. Donations requested at door

Activist Quizzo and Dance party with the CYOC
Sharpen your activist knowledge and shake your booty.
8pm at LAVA

Sunday, March 11th
Forum on Creating Economic Opportunities for Ex-Offenders and At-Risk Youth
This will be an interactive panel discussion with Q&A to follow sponsored by the Nicetown Community Development Corporation
3 pm to 5 pm (door open at 2:30)at Solutions Banquet Hall, 4414 Germantown Ave

March 15 • International Day Against Police Brutality

Saturday, March 17th
Stop the Insanity, wage peace – anti-war protest
Gathering at Binn's Park, NOON Lancaster, PA

March on the Pentagon on the 4th anniversary of the war. info: troopsouthnow.org

March 18-20
Global Action Days Against for Anniversary of the Invasion of Iraq

Sunday, March 18
Declaration of Peace Phila. Area Candlelight Vigil Against the War
6:30PM at Independence Mall Visitors Center
info: declarationofpeace.org

Tuesday, March 20th
Poems from Shadow America: Voices of the Voiceless From Our Prisons
11 am to 2 pm at the Philadelphia Free Library on the Parkway 1901 Vine Street

Sunday, March 25th

Presentation by David Parrish on The IMPACT Project
3 pm First Unitarian Church, 2125 Chestnut Street



Wednesday, March 28th
Connection Training Services presents:A Justice Month Open House (including tour of the facility, Prisoner Re-entry program overview, and wine & cheese reception)
3 pm to 7:30 pm 2233 West Allegheny Ave, 3rd Floor

Friday, March 30th
TOVA (Artist Projects for Social Change) presents Holding Up: A New Prison Legacy
a theater piece based on the true stories and performances of men incarcerated at SCI-Graterford, the production is performed by former prisoners and women and children with incarcerated loved ones.
7 pm Broad Street Ministry at 320 S. Broad St.
Admission is Free

Saturday, March 31st
Locked Up: Keys to Prison Change
An all-day conference on alternatives to punitive justice; speakers include Angela Davis & Sister Helen Prejean at the Broad Street Ministry, 320 S. Broad Street

April 14-15
ALTERNATIVES TO EMPIRE - Latin American Solidarity Conference in Chicago, Illinois
info: lasolidarity.org

Saturday, April 14
First New York Anarchist Book Fair
11-7pm At Judson Memorial Church
55 Washington Square South (NYC)

Tuesday, April 17
Tax day event-- Stop US Tax Aid to Israel Now!
info: sustainphilly@gmail.com

MayDay
Join hundreds of thousands across the world in a international struggle against bosses and capital!

June 27 - July 1
US Social Forum in Atlanta, GA
info: www.ussf2007.org

★★★★★★★★★★★★

Philly INCITE! Starting in December Philly INCITE is meeting each 1st & 3rd
Thursday from 6:30-7:45pm at the A-Space

PRAWN (Philadelphia Regional Anti-War Network)
Meets 1st Tues. at Local 4, AFSCME, 1606 Walnut.
6:30-9pm www.prawnworks.net

PRINT COLLECTIVE!!
Help Save the World and Learn how to Print!
EVERY THURSDAY NIGHT!!
7PM till Midnight (informal meeting at 9pm)
4814 Trinity Place, Phila 19143
for more info email: toolkit@riseup.net
or call shannon at 215-850-9945

Mothership Connection
A BBOY Jam & Art Show featuring BBoy Ciphers and New Artists Every month. Donations benefit *Graffiti As Political Expression, Community Greening Actions & Respect the Culture*
FREE / Donations All Ages
1st Friday of every month at LAVA

Ongoing Events and Meetings

Food Not Bombs
In a country hungry for war, that bombs countries hungry for food..
Rain or shine: Servings areSundays at 5:00PM and Mondays at 7:00PM across from the Free Library on Vine Street between 19th and 20th Streets
In West Philly : sharings happen every Wednesday @ 5pm-CEDAR PARK (50th and Baltimore)

Defenestrator Movie Night
Last Thursday of every month at Firehouse Bicycles
50th & Baltimore to benefit the defenestrator prisoner mailing
Call for info (215)727-9692 email info(at)firehousebicycles.com

sliding scale fee of \$5- \$20(pay what you can). Women of any age, size, or physical ability will benefit. Can't make it Monday? call about our full length self-defense courses offered regularly.

ACT UP
Weekly Meeting Every
Monday from 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm St. Lukes Church; 330 S. 13th St. (between Pine & Spruce) Email: actupphilly@critpath.org for more info.

Women's Anti-Violence Education (WAVE)
Monday drop-in classes every Monday night from 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm Friend.s Center; 1501 Cherry Street Phone: 215-241- 5720 for more information WAVE offers a drop-in, self-defense, class every Monday night. There is a

Weekly Meeting of Phila. County Coalition on Prison Health Care
Every Tuesday from 9:30-10:30 a.m. Philadelphia FIGHT office, 1233 Locust St., 2nd floor, For info, contact Laura McTigh: 215-380-5556

Books Through Bars
Packing Café Every Tuesday from 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm The A Space; 4722 Baltimore Ave. E-mail: info@booksthroughbars.org for more info

International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia
Every Thursday from 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm 4601 Market St., 5th floor Phone: 215-476- 5416 for more info.

Philadelphia Anti-War Forum
Meeting Third Sunday of every month from 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm ASPACE; 4722 Baltimore Ave and first Thurs. at Last Drop Coffee. E-mail: clanarchy@prodigy.net

INCITE! Radical Women of Color
Calling Radical Women of Color

Liberated Spaces

LAVA
The Lancaster Avenue Autonomous space is a center for radical media and organizing located at 4134 Lancaster Ave. in the Belmont Neighborhood of West Philly. info: 215.387.6155 or info@lavazone.org * lavazone.org

A-Space - a collectively run anarchist gallery and meeting/community space. Events are free and generally start at 7:30pm unless otherwise noted. Accessible by the 34 trolley. Plenty of parking for cars and bikes. They pass the hat to cover rent.
4722 Baltimore Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19143
215.727.0882 a-space@defenestrator.org

WOODEN SHOE BOOKS and RECORDS - Anarchist bookstore owned and run by an unpaid collective of geniuses with nothing better to do than sit around talking philosophy and riots. Carries a wide range of anarchist and radical books, periodicals, pamphlets, T-shirts, patches, CD's records etc.

508 S. Fifth Street Philadelphia, PA
215.413.0999 woodenshoe@rocketmail.com

Firehouse Bikes- A worker owned collective bike shop. 50th and Baltimore

The Divine Bicycle Church - Bike repair co-op at Neighborhood Bike Works. Tools,advice and recycled parts available. Every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday from 6:30-9pm
40th and Locust Walk, behind St. Mary's Church

Crossroads Women's Center- open Tuesdays and Thursdays
10am-2pm or by appointment
33 Maplewood Mall, Germantown 215-848-1120

The Friends Center - American Friends Service Committee HQ. Contains meeting spaces and offices for a gazillion different entities.
1501 Cherry Street

the defenestrator
PO Box 30922
Philadelphia, PA 19104

to: